

Ran's Lament

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Sometimes the people who hurt you the most are the ones you call family.

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I lay across my bed, curled up in a ball with my hands sitting gently below my chin. I know it's not what I should be doing, but I simply don't have the strength to get up and finish my tasks. It's strange, as usually I can simply ignore the burning questions in my head, but now I simply can't simply find the will to dismiss them and continue on.

Normally, it is easy to make myself believe what I was taught. Normally, it is easy to not question the situation I find myself in, convince myself I am content, even happy.

I am Ran Yakumo. Yukari Yakumo is my master. I love and adore her, and will always be loyal to her.

Yet, sometimes... a voice deep in my mind tries to convince me that these are lies. It tells me that I never had a choice, that I would be anywhere else if I could decide my own fate. I do not listen to these thoughts, I know they are simply my own mind trying to pull me away from my master. I know well it would be very selfish of me to trust myself before I trust my beloved master.

Even so, as I bury my head in the fabric of my pillow, I cannot stop myself from asking questions. The sinful, heretic concept that I may have once been something more burns too hard for me to easily forget it.

As organized as my mind is, I could not ever recall how many years I have been with my master. However, despite being dedicated to her for so long, I can find no comfort in her. Every single word she says to me is layered, I cannot help but hear disdain in even her gentlest of praises. Every time she smiles at me, I expect to her face to become scornful once again.

And every time I am inevitably required to shower her with praises and words of loyalty, I cannot help but feel that the words lack meaning. That the happy, helpful servant she is presented with every single day is simply not me. I try to train myself to believe in the words I say to her, I convince myself that I'm simply slipping from my loyalty and need to work on it. Yet, every single time I speak with her, I do not believe these words any more than the last time.

I always remember to scold myself, to look down on myself for not adoring my generous master. But it changes nothing.

I attempt to take solace in my own shikigami, Chen... I try to let the very genuine adoration she presents to me take me away from all of this. However, my master always scolds me for returning her love, she always tells me that if I continue to view to her as anything more than an item, she will become unruly and betray us both.

Once, I asked her if such ideas represented how she viewed me. My master instilled so much fear into me that day, I never asked such a question again.

Then, as so many thoughts scatter throughout my broken mind, it wanders to who I used to be. The memories before my servitude are so blurry, scattered and distant that I cannot formulate a coherent picture of who I was. The ideas in my head only become harder to hold every day, and I feel the image of my former self fading with every minute.

Yet, for some reason, I can never fully abandon my old identity. I know I am meant to abandon such memories-no, that it would be the *best* thing for me, as I could never live happily without my master. I know she has created the best life I could ever ask for, and it would be incredibly selfish to ask for anything more. I cannot remember my name, I cannot remember whatever family I may have had, I cannot remember where I lived... but I know I was once someone else, and that haunts me as long as I am awake. I find myself trying to both erase these memories and trying to explore them to paint a more coherent picture, but both conflicting goals inevitably fail.

But then, as I find my pillow being splashed with fresh tears, I remember why I inevitably abandon these thoughts. I remember that, no matter what I used to be, I will never be able to reclaim that identity. I remember that no matter how insincere my love for my master may be, I will always be required to present it. I remember that no matter how little my master cares for me, I will always be required to believe she gives me the best.

I remember that no one will ever come to save me-no one will ever even know of my plea.

I remember that she built this entire world on her lies, and no one would even suspect her of such a thing.

I remember that I will be bound to her as long I exist.

I remember that I am not Ran Yakumo.

I am not anyone anymore.